

ТЕОРЕТИЧНА КУЛЬТУРОЛОГІЯ

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VERNACULAR DESIGN AS VISUAL PRACTICE OF URBAN SPACE ORGANIZATION

Article discusses specific status of the vernacular design in the visual style of the modern Ukrainian city, where indigenous dwellers coexist with those who came recently from the country. The vernacular regions in Ukrainian cities are analyzed as complex, eclectic and grass-roots. The vernacular design is understood within the complex cultural environment, where different traditions and cultural identities coexist. The terms "vernacular life", "vernacular landscape" are explicated. The vernacular landscape is interpreted in the context of the everyday human activities brought into the public urban spaces. The crucial characteristic (amateur, brutal, trying to be visible and being invisible, economical, tactical, irrational, anachronistic) and the main principles (constraint, thrift, durability, commonness) of the vernacular design are studied within the interpretive context of urban culture collective identity.

Key words: urban space, vernacular design, vernacular landscape, territorial identification, vernacular region.

Formulation of the problem. Within the framework of contemporary cultural studies of Ukrainian urban landscapes and their spatial organization, attention is paid to such widespread phenomenon as vernacular design. This way of organizing urban space is more than contradictory and often criticized by researchers and intellectuals. On the other hand, vernacular design plays a big role in the visual style of the modern Ukrainian city, and transforms from unorganized and unregulated practices into the status of official transformation of the city (in particular, by companies responsible for the decoration of public urban spaces and do it for budgetary funds).

Analysis of research and publications. Significant contribution to the analysis of issues around the problem of everyday experience, the experience of being in the city, urban and vernacular design was made by such researchers as J. B. Jackson, G. Huang, H. Lefebvre, L. Lofland, G. Simmel, J. Krase and T. Shortell, K. Yu, Z. Wang. Applied research of current practices of vernacular design in rural and urban environments are conducted by A. Asadpour, K. Bjornard, J. Palmer, E. Zielińska and J. Cieślak. Modern researches of the Ukrainian urban space and the issues of the vernacular environment in Ukraine are being conducted by I. Gukalova, V. Miroshnichenko, E. Sarapina.

Purpose of the article. This article is devoted to the analysis of the vernacular design practices in the urban public spaces, their main characteristics and principles that can help professional designers in profound visual transformation of Ukrainian cities.

Exposition of the main material of the study. The term "vernacular" is related with "native of..." or "common to a location or region". It can be treated as a visual reflection of different cultures and styles of living combination in one city region, especially of a combination of rural and urban post-soviet Ukrainian visual cultures. Thus, within analyzing the vernacular design we can better understand the complex cultural environment, where different (often opposite) traditions and cultural identities are implicit. But before this, there is a need to formulate a context around this notion, that is a need to explicate the terms "vernacular life", "vernacular landscape", which lead to the creation of the vernacular design and reaction to it.

The "vernacular life" usually refers to the mundane urban development, the structure of streets and public spaces – everything that comes into the lives of residents, and this city is a temporary environment. As E. Sarapina states that the vernacular life is "...the idea of mental construction, which in some part coincides with the physical space of the city" [3, p. 52].

This means that the city dwellers (with the specific history of Ukrainian cities, such as Kyiv, that have an eclectic architecture in the city center, transformed with the new high-rise buildings) have their values, tied to a specific urban landscape, which they usually remember from childhood and are not ready for its radical changing. "The vernacular environment is changeable and variative not only because of physical changes in the city, but also through transformation, made the inhabitants aware of the "authentic" image of the city. Although the vernacular urban environment means the modern construction, public spaces and urban morphology, the dwellers often formulate it, meaning the notion of architectural style" [3, p. 56].

The vernacular life means the continuous feeling of comfort and identification with the space a person lives in: "...the city dweller is aware that it is not as well known for architectural value structures as the usual environment as interaction of people with past and present, with buildings, spaces and among themselves necessary in urban dynamics and creates a spirit of life" [3, p. 57]. It's not homogeneous and involves many different areas and styles with different categories of people living there. Though usually talking about a city we mean a center historical area, which is the most popular for the dwellers and the tourists. But different social groups of people in the city have their different associations with the area: "Vertical inheritance is a flexible way of describing the historical values it shares a relatively small group of people. It may be locally specific in style and subject matter or familiar only to those who share a common language and set of experiences" [3, p. 59].

That is why there is a common narrative of urban vernacular areas evaluation and rating. V. Miroshnichenko analyses this phenomenon using the example of Kharkiv and its notion of prestigious regions for living (buying the property) and the notion of vernacular region: "The prestige of the vernacular region is formed by objective properties of the urban environment, such as aesthetic attractiveness, high level of social and transport infrastructure, good ecology status and others, then becomes such a property that begins to influence the mass behavior of people, becoming one of the leading factors shaping demand for housing" [2, p. 125].

Speaking about the vernacular urban space, we should compose the spiritual and utilitarian values of the people living there, the main purpose of which is the spatial identity. I. Gukalova describes this notion in her research: "...spatial identity is the lived or realized meanings of subjective socio-geographical reality that shape a person's sense of belonging to a particular space and society. It is

not an aggregate of individual mental impressions, but an awareness mediated by socio-economic, cultural and political factors" [1, p. 27–28].

The priority relevance of interconnected consideration of territorial identification and migration issues is due to the lack of experience of the place as such without movement. To better understand the space of one's life, people should see it from the outside. It is the experience of travel, work voyages (migration) that is significant in forming initially objective ideas about your place of life: "...migration should be considered not only as a process of mechanical movement of the population, but also as a process of moving people in "sections" of identities (professional, linguistic, cultural, ethnic, etc.)" [1, p. 28].

Only identified with the territory they live in and the territorial community, people get a need of fighting for this territory, its unique and genuine view, of struggling for the right to determine the boundaries of these territories. I. Gukalova calls this "spatial identity consolidation" important, because it "...requires the use of strategies to construct it. Here are two possible directions, which differ in what exactly the meanings are attributed to particular territories: – a past-based authentication strategy, – creation of new brands, myths, values based on existing resources and history of development of the territory" [1, p. 29].

A space preserved and transformed by the people, who live that and feel identified with it, can be called "a vernacular landscape". This term is actively used within social, cultural and urban studies. J. Krase and T. Shortell "Urban spaces are filled with signs of collective identity. In the physical environment, architectural details, commercial signs, and graffiti, among other things, signify the flows of people and culture. So too do social practices, such as commercial transactions, socializing, and commuting in the public spaces of vernacular ethnic neighborhoods" [6, p. 375]. The researchers argue that the vernacular environment is always unstable and dynamic, as much as the city life. "Vernacular landscapes are everywhere and changing as a result of globalization, urbanization, modernization, immigration, and other forces that create layers, or palimpsests, of competing North American, European, Asian, African, and Latin American cultural artifacts. As people move from their home nation, they take signs of their culture and implant these in their neighborhood in the host nation through their social practices. This includes everything from physical changes in the built environment to their mere presence in the social spaces of the new neighborhood. Immigrants generally lack the power to recreate the valued spaces of their home cultures, but their day-to-day lives are full of expressive and phatic signs of their ethnic, religious, and class identity" [6, p. 377]. This context can be seen as crucial for the situation in Ukrainian cities, where indigenous lives coexist with those who came recently, bringing with them new values concerning the city and the region or their absence. So, the vernacular regions of the cities of Ukraine are complex, eclectic and often grass-roots.

A. Asadpour, analyzing the ideas of Krase and Shortell, defies vernacular landscape as "...a combination of natural and human structures in the context of the lives of ordinary people that traditionally has been studied in rural and semi-rural areas with a historical approach" [4, p. 2]. As the researcher states, for qualitative analysis of the vernacular environment, there should be an understanding of the different philosophical, cultural, social, historical and design contexts of the territory: "This interpretation of vernacular landscape is highly semiotic, textual, and postmodern, and as the ethnic and human races in the natural and climatic context of their geographical and ecological regions

throughout history have been depicted, the contemporary interpretation of the vernacular landscape is also a product of marking of the variety of ethnic and race-linguistic groups in the metropolises and global cities of the present era, which is represented by neighbors and neighborhoods" [4, p. 9].

The vernacular landscape has to be interpreted only in the context of everyday: with the everyday human activities brought into the public urban spaces, that thus being transformed, sometimes in a good way and sometimes not. «In this view, the "urban vernacular landscapes" are embodied in visual data of artificial space and social data of urban neighborhoods. An opportunity that allows different city groups to adjust the spatial identity, means changing the paradigm of the native landscape from the "villages and suburbs" to the "world or global city"» [4, p. 10]. Designers have to deal with this situation and use the vernacular urban practices as the visual communication of the city dwellers.

That is, Polish researchers E. Zielińska and J. Cieślak presented a case of professional designers of post-soviet Wrocław, using the vernacular designs of local entrepreneurs as a visual and social basis. For this, they had to analyze the vernacular design practices to get the basic characteristics of it: amateur, brutal, trying to be visible and being invisible, economical, tactical, irrational, anachronistic.

Firstly, vernacular design is always made by amateurs, not by the professional designers: "...it is mostly agnostic to the language of professional design. It does not know of the marketing terminology – that of effectiveness, appropriateness, ambiance, brand awareness" [8, p. 118]. That is why it's always unpredictable in performance and matching. The brutality of such a design is connected with no historical and aesthetical context taken into account by the authors: "It is often described as eye poking. The subtlety is seldom a mean of expression. The sense of humour is often crude and sexist" [8, p. 120]. The vernacular design has nothing to do with traditions and cultural values connected to the territory. Visibility is very important for the entrepreneurs that create the vernacular design because that is how they see the success of the exterior designing itself: «"Visibility" is probably the only principle that was fully adopted from the mainstream language of branding, and then driven to the extreme» [8, p. 120]. But the irony is that such a shouting visibility is not seen by the people because it usually turns into the visual noise: "...something prevalent, invasive, persistent, but not worthy, devoid of individual value, something that must exist around us, but makes us turn our heads the other way. These rather desperate and uncoordinated attempts to get noticed lead to ever more visual chaos, where the individual messages drown, and are even more ignored" [8, p. 120]. In Ukrainian cities it is a common picture.

But the next characteristic – economical – is not always relevant to the local specific design practices. For the Polish researchers, in vernacular design "...used materials are hardly ever considered for their quality or original purpose, but rather, for how they can be refitted for use in a current "project". Everything in vernacular sign making is recyclable, all elements can be repurposed, and it often seems that the nearby junk yard is the prime resource of components" [8, p. 121]. In Ukraine, there are vernacular design elements often made of expensive materials, or those that should resemble expensive ones. And they are vernacular because they are executed not professionally and not qualitatively. That is why being tactical is another important characteristic, because the vernacular design elements are always created for the narrow purpose – to attract the local target audience, here and now: "It does not know of strategic planning. It does not care about the broader context, or the past, or what will come after. It is an

instant communication tool for here and now, using all means available at hand" [8, p. 124]. All these characteristics lead to the irrationality, anachronism as the main ones.

K. Bjornard, on the contrary, sees good and essential characteristics in vernacular kind of urban designing, analyzing it as a visual communication practice that would help the professionals: "...it is a systematic method for creation that can guide us toward more sustainable practices. System thinking is a leading development in contemporary design and those systems requiring the least resources will best serve design on its path toward sustainability. Vernacular design offers a valuable model as its aim is accomplishing the most with the least" [5, p. 1].

The researcher proposes three main principles of the vernacular design that help to transform the surroundings and create a more profound territory identification: constraint, thrift, durability. The first and second ones are inherent to the local small entrepreneurs, because they have no time, money and background to thrive for something bigger: "The constraint of locality may limit formal elements, materials, and size to vernacular builders, but making choices inside the presented constraints allows for innovation to take place outside of initial expectations" [5, p. 2]. Though, there is always a durability present in it, because such simple decisions are sufficient and satisfying: "The long lifespan of buildings is part of what allows them to grow, adapt, and evolve. With that comes consideration of material and maintenance" [5, p. 3]. That is why, the result of these three principles being applied is the commonness of the elements and of the tastes of people living in the neighborhood: "Common features survive the passage of time when they are generally understood as "good." Over years, the vernacular incorporates more and more "good" features while eradicating "bad" ones. While we (as professional designers) cannot always behave as conservatively as vernacular designers, that doesn't mean we cannot adopt their "common" ideals of constraint, durability, and thrift" [8, p. 5]. So, as K. Bjornard shows, there is a real way for the designers to get helpful and inspirational characteristics of the vernacular visual practices.

To continue this, J. Palmer analyses the rural vernacular creative practices to see how they can change the community, and to transfer it on the city: "... the notion of the creative countryside has the potential to gain credence. Such creativities are distinctively different from highbrow or commercially driven creativities; they are everyday creative activities that use local materials, practices, and the specificities of the geographic location within which they are created. They are interesting because of the person/people, place, materials, and time involved in their creation" [7, p. 239].

It deserves paying huge attention because in Ukrainian cities there are a lot of cases of bringing the rural vernacular public space designing elements into the urban space, because a lot of urban dwellers in Ukraine came from the countryside and brought with them the special aesthetics and values: "...a rural vernacular creativity that helps people make connections – whether it is the producer or the apprehender – and makes aspects of place and time visible in ways that have the potential to change perceptions of place and landscape. It is through this getting to know and care about places that people begin to pay attention and explore development options in more conscientious and responsible ways" [7, p. 253]. J. Palmer is optimistic talking about such practices, because they are realized consciously and adherently. In Ukraine cities, we can see sporadic and chaotic ways of applying it: either it comes from the city government, or it is a grassroots initiative.

Conclusion

The term "vernacular" is related with "native of..." or "common to a location or region". It can be treated as a visual reflection of different cultures and styles of living combination in one city region, especially of a combination of rural and urban post-soviet Ukrainian visual cultures. Thus, within analyzing the vernacular design we can better understand the complex cultural environment, where different (often opposite) traditions and cultural identities are implicit.

The crucial characteristic of the vernacular design is that it is practiced by non-professionals. Other main characteristics of vernacular design are: (in)visibility and visual pollution; chaotic; tactical approach; the aesthetics of ugliness; the definition of local, everyday aesthetics; popular in the developing cities, which seek to reestablish their own visual identity (dealing with post-communist architectural and urban planning heritage); breaking the rules and offending the burgher/professional taste; creates hybrid culture.

These urban spaces are filled with signs of collective identity and, often, inter-group competition. In the physical environment, architectural details, commercial signs, and graffiti, among other things, signify the flows of people and culture. So too do social practices, such as commercial transactions, socializing, and commuting, in the public spaces of ethnic vernacular neighborhoods. Our analysis, based on the images shown here and hundreds of others, reveals distinctive visual representations of social differences. Observing these characteristics of vernacular design can bring us the interpretive context of urban culture collective identity.

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ВЕРНАКУЛЯРНИЙ ДИЗАЙН ЯК ВІЗУАЛЬНА ПРАКТИКА ОРГАНІЗАЦІЇ МІСЬКОГО ПРОСТОРУ

Стаття присвячена дослідженню особливого статусу вернакулярного дизайну в візуальному стилі сучасного українського міста, де корінні жителі сусідять з тими, хто недавно приїхав у місто з периферії. Вернакулярні райони в українських містах визначені як комплексні, екліктичні і низові. Вернакулярний дизайн досліджений у складному культурному середовищі, де співіснують різні традиції і культурні особливості. Дано визначення термінам "вернакулярне життя", "вернакулярний ландшафт". Вернакулярний ландшафт проінтерпретований у контексті повсякденної людської діяльності, що внесена в суспільний міський простір. Основні характеристики (аматорський, брутальний, той, що прагне бути видимим і при цьому непомітний, економний, тактичний, ірраціональний, анахронічний) і головні принципи (стриманість, ощадливість, витривалість, типовість) вернакулярного дизайну досліджені в інтерпретаційному контексті міської культури та створеної в ній колективної ідентичності.

Ключові слова: міський простір, вернакулярний дизайн, вернакулярний ландшафт, територіальна ідентифікація, вернакулярний район.

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ВЕРНАКУЛЯРНЫЙ ДИЗАЙН КАК ВИЗУАЛЬНАЯ ПРАКТИКА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ГОРОДСКОГО ПРОСТРАНСТВА

Статья посвящена исследованию особого статуса вернакулярного дизайна в визуальном стиле современного украинского города, где коренные жители соседствуют с теми, кто недавно приехал в город с периферии. Вернакулярные районы в украинских городах определены как комплексные, эклектичные и низовые. Вернакулярный дизайн исследован в сложной культурной среде, где сосуществуют различные традиции и культурные особенности. Дано определение терминам "вернакулярная жизнь", "вернакулярный ландшафт". Вернакулярный ландшафт проинтерпретирован в контексте повседневной человеческой деятельности, вносимой в общественное городское пространство. Основные характеристики (аматорский, брутальный, стремящийся быть видимым и при этом незаметный, экономный, тактический, иррациональный, анахроничный) и главные принципы (сдержанность, бережливость, долговечность, типичность) вернакулярного дизайна изучены в интерпретационном контексте городской культуры и создаваемой в ней коллективной идентичности.

Ключевые слова: городское пространство, вернакулярный дизайн, вернакулярный ландшафт, территориальная идентификация, вернакулярный район.

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МЕТОДОЛОГІЧНА БАЗА ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ КУЛЬТУРНИХ ІНСТИТУТІВ

У статті досліджуються "атомістичні", "голістичні", "телеологічні" теорії соціальних інститутів, які закладають методологічну базу досліджень культурних інститутів. У розгляді основних підходів до визначення соціального інституту з'ясовуються сутнісні характеристики культурного інституту, які виявляються у трьох аспектах: нормативно-регулятивному (комплекс цінностей, норм, правил), поведінково-процесуальному (поведінкові моделі, інституційні ролі, форми спільної взаємодії), діяльнісно-організаційному (заклади культури, які виробляють, зберігають та просувають культурне благо). Окреслюється проблемне поле досліджень культурних інститутів, що вбирає в себе дескриптивний опис інституційних практик, з'ясування закономірностей функціонування культурних інститутів, прогнозування майбутніх змін інституційних культурних практик у контексті економіки культури та культурної політики.

Ключові слова: дослідження культурних інститутів, соціальний інститут, спільна діяльність, соціальні практики, економіка культури, культурна політика.

Постановка проблеми. У наш час все частіше в науковому дискурсі та в громадських дискусіях постають питання реформування культурних інститутів у напрямі їхньої комерціалізації. Проте саме поняття "культурний інститут" не є однозначним. Пояснити причини їхньої появи, розвитку та трансформацій, надати прогнози майбутніх змін можна, спираючись на виявлені закономірності їхнього функціонування.

Оскільки дослідження інститутів знаходяться ще в стадії свого становлення та розвитку, сучасні теорії соціальних інститутів не є однорідними. Низка з них прагне пояснити специфіку соціального інституту з огляду на універсальні закони функціонування суспільства. Інші теорії інститутів пояснюють їх через партикулярні, специфічні чинники, беручи до уваги особливий соціокультурний контекст та можливі збіги у розвитку подій. Інша